

# Prosecuting Bias Crime and Zero Tolerance for Bullying

## Successful Prosecutions Targeted Hate-Related Criminal Activity; Outreach, Training Efforts Sought to Combat Bigotry, Bullying

Because bigotry and the anti-social behavior that can accompany it is a threat to all New Jerseyans, the Attorney General's Office has made combating bias crime a priority. Located within the Division of Criminal Justice, the Attorney General's Office of Bias Crimes and Community Relations is dedicated to the elimination of crimes motivated by animosity toward others because of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender or disability. The Office of Bias Crimes and Community Relations assists law enforcement agencies in investigating and prosecuting bias incidents, and facilitates training for police officers in bias crime investigation, cultural diversity awareness and conflict resolution. The Office also works with county and municipal Human Relations Commissions to coordinate efforts to promote understanding within diverse neighborhoods and communities. Victims of bias crime are encouraged to call the New Jersey Bias Crime Victim Support Services hotline at 1-800-277-BIAS.

Through collaborative effort involving Bias Crimes and Community Relations and other agencies within the Attorney General's Office — for example, the Division on Civil Rights — the State is also making a concerted effort to combat bullying. Although it is not limited exclusively to educational settings, bullying often takes place in schools, disrupting learning, impacting negatively on the self-confidence of young people, and acting as a catalyst to violence.

As a result, the Attorney General's Office has made it a point to not only address bullying incidents when they occur, but to liaison with the education community on a number of bullying prevention initiatives.

### Bias Crime Prosecutions

#### ❖ East Coast Hate Crew —

On March 26, 2004, six members of the East Coast Hate Crew were arrested and charged with attempted murder, as well as second and third degree offenses including conspiracy, bias intimidation, robbery and aggravated assault. The investigation revealed that the organization, which included juveniles and adults, had targeted members of the Hispanic community in Ocean County for assault and vandalism during a two-year period. The adult cases are still pending. Juveniles charged with offenses pleaded guilty and/or agreed to cooperate with the investigation.

#### ❖ State v. Martin and Stickler —

In August 2002, defendants Larry Martin and Joshua Stickler, two white youths with ties to the National Alliance, attempted to assault a Hispanic male with a baseball bat and crowbar. Subsequent to their arrests, both defendants pleaded guilty to third degree crimes of making terroristic threats and possession of a weapon, and were sentenced to an 18-month probationary term.

#### ❖ Gabriel Carafa Investigation —

On April 29, 2004, defendant Gabriel Carafa pleaded guilty to charges of second-degree bias intimidation and third-degree making terroristic threats, and was sentenced to three years in prison. Carafa had vandalized an Ocean County convenience store, operated by a family of Indian descent, and made threats and disparaging remarks directed at the employees. A co-defendant, Jonathan Teague, pleaded guilty to second-degree bias intimidation, aggravated assault, and other charges. He was sentenced to a five-year prison term. Teague attempted to run over a store employee with his car during the same incident. At the time, Carafa was reportedly a member of bias groups known as Church of the Creator and Aryan Renaissance Society. Upon his original indictment, Carafa jumped bail and fled to Florida, where he was apprehended and subsequently extradited back to Ocean County.

#### ❖ State v. Castellano —

Defendant Ronald Castellano pleaded guilty in NJ Superior Court in Morris County to a third-degree charge of possessing steroids and a fourth-degree charge of possession of Viagra with intent to distribute. An investigation in 2003 and 2004 revealed that Castellano was distributing steroids and other controlled dangerous substances to members of the skinhead/white supremacist community. Castellano pleaded guilty in 2004, and received a three-year probation term.



*This Logo is being used in an anti-bullying campaign to raise awareness regarding this important issue confronting New Jersey's children. The campaign also includes outreach by the Office of Bias Crimes and Community Relations to schools throughout the State.*

#### ❖ **State v. Piskorowski** —

In December 2004, an indictment was obtained in Bergen County against Adam Piskorowski, who is allegedly affiliated with an entity known as the Bergen County Hooligans, as well as several Eastern-European skinhead organizations. Piskorowski is suspected, along with others, of being involved in a bias-motivated assault in Garfield. The indictment charges Piskorowski with third-degree bias intimidation and fourth-degree theft. At present, he remains a fugitive.

### **Anti-Bullying Efforts**

#### ❖ **Division on Civil Rights Prosecution of Bias-Based Bullying/Harassment** —

Rejecting an earlier ruling by a State Administrative Law Judge, the Division on Civil Rights found in 2004 that the Toms River school district was liable for the consistent, bias-based harassment — and occasional physical assault — of a Toms River high school student by fellow students who perceived him to be homosexual. The mother of the ninth-grader elected to withdraw her son from the Toms River schools due to his victimization.

#### ❖ **Telephone Hotline, Public Service Announcements** —

The Attorney General's Office established in 2004 a 24-hour telephone hotline, 1-877-NO-BULLY, to assist the victims of bullying. In conjunction with this initiative, an anti-bullying Public Service Announcement (PSA) by the Attorney General began airing in late 2004. The PSA reminded listeners that bullying can be prosecuted as a bias crime — half of all bullying incidents are bias-related — urged listeners to talk to their children about bullying, and to ask about the mandatory "no bullying" policy at their children's schools.

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## **8 from Ocean County arrested in hate crimes**

By KATHLEEN HOPKINS  
TOMS RIVER BUREAU

**TOMS RIVER** — Authorities yesterday rounded up eight people they say targeted minorities in southern Ocean County for violence based on ethnicity or race.

The suspects, all from Ocean County, are a "loosely formed group of individuals" known as

